



Northern Illinois Fly Tyers 309 N. Maple Ave. Wood Dale, IL 60191

October 3, 2016

MDEQ Back Forty Comments  
Office of Oil, Gas, and Minerals  
1504 West Washington Street  
Marquette, Mi 49855  
[DEQ-Mining-Comments@michigan.gov](mailto:DEQ-Mining-Comments@michigan.gov)

Re: Back Forty Project Comments

Dear Sir/Madam:

The proposed Back Forty Project, a gigantic open pit sulfide mine, that would be located on Michigan's shoreline of the Menominee River, was discussed at the Northern Illinois Fly Tyers (NIFT) business meeting on October 3, 2016. The unanimous decision from its members (36 members) and the club officers was that NIFT is strongly opposed to the Back Forty Project.

The primary reasons for the club's opposition to this mine are:

Members of NIFT frequently fish the Menominee River for smallmouth bass and other game fish. Loss of this terrific fishery due to pollution caused by a operational mistakes of the mine and its processing facilities by an uninformed, inattentive or disgruntled employee or from miscalculations in the mine's operations would be devastating. The risk of polluting the Menominee River, nearby environs, and Lake Michigan from this proposed sulfide mine are much greater than the benefits. Supporting this statement is the fact that Aquila Resources is profit motivated their environmental type decisions will be in favor of profits versus protecting the environment.

Over several years, approximately \$7,000,000 was spent to improve lake sturgeon passage over five hydroelectric dams on the Menominee River. Project will be completed in the Spring of 2017. Funds were provided by federal, state (Michigan and Wisconsin), and private sources. Pollution entering the river from the proposed mine site would damage the sturgeon, especially the eggs and freshly spawned sturgeon. This would mean that \$7,000,000 and all the work involved was completely wasted.

Contributing to the pollution the mine site would be the possibility of “major storms” that occur much more frequently due to “climate change”. Major rainstorms or snowfall will produce additional strain on retention ponds at the mine site that, if a breach were to occur would lead to a catastrophic pollution spill into the Menominee River. It is all but impossible to control all the polluted water from such an event at this 800 acre site.

The 36 members of the Northern Illinois Fly Tyers are totally against authorizing the Back Forty Project mine permit. We collectively petition the Department of Environmental Quality for the State of Michigan to deny the permit for the Back Forty Mine in order to protect this vibrant and important watershed, the Menominee River

Sincerely,

Megan Berns  
Secretary - NIFT